

June 2012 Book Reviews

My No, No, No Day!

By Rebecca Patterson

Talk about being crabby. Bella is having one of those days. From the moment she wakes up and finds baby brother Bob in her room, to eggs for breakfast, shoes that feel too tight, a broken cookie and the list goes on. Thankfully Bella has an understanding mother who puts her to bed with a kiss and a wish for a cheerful tomorrow. Written with simplicity and detailed illustrations that help to convey the story line, this story book will be enjoyed by preschoolers through 2nd grade with most readers seeing themselves as the story progress. We all have a bad day, but there is good one coming.

Pat Thompson, WSC

The Unidentified

By Rae Mariz

Fifteen-year-old Katey, also known as Kid, attends the Game, the future's reincarnation of school where companies have taken control of education, moved it into a mall setting, and had most assignments done via video games and social climbing to obtain corporate sponsorships. After Katey witnesses an un-sponsored fake suicide, she tries to discover who a group called "The Unidentified" is. Along the way, she is branded by two school companies in an effort to make "The Unidentified" trendy. Eventually she discovers who belongs to the group and that their anti-establishment focus is actually being hijacked so that another company can move in on the school and take over. There is a message against consumerism somewhere in the plot and a warning about companies taking over education and the end of privacy. There is endless discussion of how students get branded – even so much as to have one girl branded by a tampon company – meaning, of course, she has to wear their advertisements. However, the author of this young adult book for high school students just drops you into this "school" and never really explains how or why it works. You are left wondering why the students are left to roam the building and how any education could possibly get done. Perhaps that's the point. In the end, I was just confused.

Valerie Knight, WSC

How Loud Can You Burp?

By Glenn Murphy

This book is a collection of scientific answers to all kinds of questions about the human body, global warming, the brain, and many others. It is recommended for readers in 3rd-High School and any library collection. A unique feature to this book is that it contains high interest information. You need to be a good reader to understand the material presented in this book. This would be a good purchase for those who are interested in scientific explanations.

Sharon Kinnan

Cleopatra's Moon

By Vicky Alvear Schechter

Cleopatra's Moon brings to light the little known story of Cleopatra VII's daughter, Cleopatra Selene. Written from the perspective of Cleopatra Selene, you learn about the war Octavianus (adopted son of Julius Ceaser) wants against Egypt that leads to the suicides of Cleopatra Selene's parents, Marcus Antonis and Cleopatra VII. Cleopatra Selene and her two surviving brothers, Alexandros Helios and Ptolemuy XVI Philadelphos (or Ptolly) are sent to Rome to live as royal captives in the home of Octavianus and Marcus Antonius' Roman wife. There, she tries to discover a way to leave the shadow of her mother even as she plots to escape to her homeland and take on the mantle of queen. However, it may take allying herself with a powerful young man. Cleopatra Selene is not sure which one to choose. This is an excellent novel for high school students and other young adults whether they are studying the beginnings of the Roman Empire and/or its influence on Egypt or they just want an engaging historical fiction to

read. It includes a character list of both fictional and nonfiction characters in the book, as well as author's notes about Cleopatra Selene's future beyond the book and general history facts found in the novel. I highly recommend it.

Valerie Knight, WSC

Unearthly

By Cynthia Hand

Clara Gardner is part angel – a Quartarius to be exact, meaning that her mother was half-angel and her dad was human. Every angel blood has a purpose, a purpose that is revealed to them during adolescence. Clara's purpose started coming to her in walking visions a little at a time. A vision of license plate led her and her family to move to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, which in turn lead her to Christian, a boy in her new school. Clara just "knows" her purpose is to save him from a fire; so she practices flying and lifting heavy objects to get ready for the day her vision showed her. However, she didn't count falling in love with another boy – a human boy who has nothing to do with her purpose. This was such a fun read. Cynthia Hand is an imaginative author who has created a unique lore around beings that have been discussed for centuries. She introduces us to not only the angel bloods, but full blooded White and Black Wing angels, each bringing new consequences to the story line. High school students will enjoy what she has to say.

Valerie Knight, WSC

When the World is Ready for Bed

By Gillian Shields

This book is a poetic lullaby illustrating the bedtime routine. It is recommended for newborns on up to middle graders. This book is relaxing with rhyming words and cute illustrations. This would be a nice selection for the very young reader.

Sharon Kinnan

Hallowed

By Cynthia Hand

In this sequel to *Unearthly*, we follow Clara Gardner, an angel blood, after she fails at her purpose. Christian, as it turns out is also an angel blood and it seems that heaven wants them together. However, she is torn between her love for Tucker and the relationship she is thinks she is destined to have with Christian. Plus, to complicate matters, she is starting to have dreams – dreams about a funeral where someone she loves has died. Is it Tucker or someone else? As Clara tries to discover her future, she learns even more about what being an angel blood is all about and some surprising revelations about her family and herself. As captivating as the first in the series, *Hallowed* takes you deeper into the world of angel bloods, making you eager to learn as much as you can. If you read the first book, this second book is a must read.

Valerie Knight, WSC

Friends for Keeps: My Best Frenemy

By Julie Bowe

Ever wonder what it's like to be a young girl, trying to grow up and fit in? If so, you need to check out this book. Ida may has a perfectly great friend in Stacey. Through their adventures and in and outside of school the reader can see what great friends love to do together as you follow these two. But as we all know, life isn't always easy, things change very quickly (especially in a girl's world). Jenna Drews, Ida's best frenemy, starts trouble when she brings a truth-or-dare game to school, prompting all the girls to start misbehaving. Ida finds herself in the principal's office sweating out the decision to take all the heat and get to stay "in" with the girls or tell the truth and risk being ousted by all. Well, the truth comes out and now her only chance is to do a triple-dog dare to get back in the good graces of the group. Will her best friend come to her aid or not take the risk and stick with the group? Ah, the wonderful experiences of growing up as a girl. This book would work for a public or school library. It is written for about 4th-6th grade readers. It truly describes the trials and traumas of having to make life decisions

like, should I do what I know is right or should I do anything just to try and fit in with the popular kids?

Jane Dodson

Animal Crackers Fly the Coop

By Kevin O'Malley

This story is about many animals, who think they need to get away from their current home, get together to go follow their dream. Which is a dream most animals wouldn't have or could actually do but it's a cute story. The jokes that they tell are actually kinda cute and funny. Recommended for public or school libraries. It's a cute story that I think little kids would enjoy hearing. The jokes are unique and good for kids to repeat over and over.

Amanda Hank, Wayne State College

Happy Endings, a Story About Suffixes

By Robin Pulver

Who doesn't like a good ending? Well, this book is packed full of them! It would be a great addition to have in any classroom learning about suffixes. It features a class who is getting ready for summer vacation and a teacher who is bound and determined to teach, right up to the very end. His last lesson he is sharing with his class is that of suffixes. In the text any time a suffix is used it is bolded in yellow. The whimsical illustrations of the characters boast speech bubbles, with every suffix bolded in red to help the reader identify it as such. When the class comes back from lunch to learn even more about word endings they find they have disappeared right off the board! The teacher announces there will be no summer vacation until the word endings are found! The word endings, who had slipped off to the gym to get stronger and braver, see the wanted posters for themselves in the hallway. They decide to create clues for the children to help them discover where and how important they are. I can't see too many children picking this book up and enjoying it independently, but it would be a great book to help support anyone who is teaching suffixes. The pages are very busy with many words and fanciful drawings. With an adult leader many things could be brought to the listener's attention. This book would enhance any public or school library and be focused for any aged reader who is learning about suffixes. It has some great helpful rules about adding suffixes at the end of the story.

Jane Dodson

Cate of the Lost Colony

By Lisa Klein

When both her parents die, Catherine goes to live with her uncle who doesn't want her. So when Queen Elizabeth requests that Catherine become one of her maids of honor she is excited to have found a place where she fits in. When Sir Raleigh starts taking notice of her the Queen does not approve as the Queen sees Sir Raleigh as her love interest. Catherine is shipped off to the new colony to face the unforeseen. She and the other colonists have to rely on Manteo, a Croatoan Indian for their survival. Soon Cate is not sure if she has feelings for Manteo or if her heart still belongs to Raleigh. This book has an accelerated reader rating of 6.1 and is for grades 6-9. This is a fictional account based on the history of Sir Walter Raleigh's explorations of the new world. Touted to be a fast-moving story there is NOTHING fast moving about the book. History should be made interesting. This book is just a long drawn-out history of the first colonists to travel to North America.

Diane Limoges

The Clockwork Three

By Matthew Kirby

Giuseppe is forced to play his violin on the streets for his evil master. When he finds a green violin suddenly he feels he has a chance to earn the money needed to return to his home in Italy. Hannah works as a maid at the local hotel to support her family as her father has suffered a stroke and is unable to work. Frederick works as an apprentice for a clock maker. All the very different life chance meetings makes them friends that soon learn they need each other to help

reach their individual dream. This book has an accelerated reader level of 4.5 and is for grades 4th-th. Well written, you almost feel you are on the streets listening to the violin play and watching each one struggle to reach their individual goals. Here is a book worth encouraging young readers to try.

Diane Limoges

The Extra-Ordinary Princess

By Carolyn Q. Ebbitt

Amelia is the 4th princess in line to rule her country. This means it doesn't matter if she is not perfect and/or beautiful as she does not have to worry about ruling. That is until the plague kills her parents. As Merrill Amelia's older sister is not yet 18, the country is to be ruled by her Uncle Count Raven until Merrill's 18th birthday. The Count is evil and turns Merrill into a tree and Amelia's other sisters Lily and Rose into swans. Now unlikely Amelia must find a way to reverse the spell and save the country. This book has an accelerated reading level of 6.3 and is for 3rd through 5th grade. Though at times a little draggy with unimportant details over all this is a good read. As the reading level is above the subject level, if you are a young reader with above level reading capabilities you may find this a good read.

Diane Limoges

Close to Famous

By Joan Bauer

Through all kinds of adversity, Foster learns to bake really well. Through her baking she meets all kinds of people and overcomes her reading problem. This book is recommended for 3rd grade- Junior High readers and any library collection. It contains a great storyline and is easy to follow. This would be a great choice for the pre-teens in your library.

Sharon Kinnan

Once Upon a Saturday

By Leslie Lamble

It is Saturday and June has a list of chores before she can do what she wants to do. Throughout the process of doing chores, June uses her imagination and is soon finished with her chores. This book is recommended for readers from Kindergarten through 5th grade and any library collection. The characters in this book are very unique and imaginary. Also, there are pictures to go along with each scene. This would be a great choice to add to a children's book collection.

Sharon Kinnan

Stable

By Ted Lewin

This Brooklyn horse stable has a lot of history. In the late 1800's and early 1900's this stable provided horses for people to get to places, like the beach. It also used the horses for work by pulling wagons and steam engines. Horses were the booming key to everyday life. By the 1960's that was all faded away but the stable still stands. The horses are more used now for riding lessons, parties, and parades. This book has pretty water colored pictures. The horses names are creative and given with love. Recommended for public or school libraries. I am a horse lover so this story intrigued me. I like the fact that this is a real place. It being right in the middle of a city makes it an interesting place to want to visit!

Amanda Hank, Wayne State College

Charlie The Ranch Dog

By Ree Drummond

Charlie, the ranch dog, is very good at helping around the ranch. Charlie shoos the cows out of the yard and garden. Charlie, along with his best friend Suzie, helps fix fence, help in the garden, round up cattle, and go fishing. But don't forget those most important nap and meals times! What a good little story of the life of a ranch dog. Recommended for public or school

libraries. I think the pictures are very well done and this story hits home cause I'm a country girl at heart! I enjoy the little personal notes in the recipe at the back of the book.

Amanda Hank, Wayne State College

Old Bear and His Cub

By Olivier Dunrea

Old Bear and Little Cub loved each other very much. They looked after each other and took care of each other. Each of them think they can do what they want but end up doing what the other one wants them to do. Recommended for public or school libraries. This story reminds me of the Three Little Bears. These Bears are a family as well and there are many repeated patterns and lines in both stories. It is a simple story that I think small children will enjoy listening to.

Amanda Hank, Wayne State College

One More Acorn

By Don Freeman

Fall is in full swing and Papa squirrel needs to find his hidden acorns to feed his family. He has a little bit of a trouble because of busy streets, crowded parks, and a parade that day, but he makes out ok. Recommended for public or school libraries. I think children will point out the lines that repeat and start saying them with who is reading it.

Amanda Hank, Wayne State College

When My Baby Dreams

By Adele Emerson

This book is a parent's take on what her baby is dreaming about when she sleeps. This mother puts her child down on different scenes on the floor. Baby Mila dreams about many different things from playing with friends to taming an African leopard. The author has used clothes, pillows, and blankets to create cute scenes in this book. What a creative book and idea. Many babies sleep a lot and this is a neat way of one day showing the child how much she slept as a baby. This book is great for preschool and kindergarten readers and would make an excellent addition to any library collection.

Lara Morrow

Breadcrumbs

By Anne Ursu

Hazel and Jack have been best friends for years. Now at eleven, are a boy and girl really supposed to be best friends? They have done everything together. And now with her parents' divorce, Hazel needs Jack more than ever as a friend. She does not fit in well or make friends easily with others. But then one day Jack is a different person and doesn't pay attention to Hazel anymore. He hangs out with other boys his age. And then Jack disappears altogether and Hazel must find him. I would not recommend this book. The author has used a fairy tale format to explain the changes that can occur while growing up especially between boys and girls. This was not interesting to me at all and difficult to read, follow, and try to figure out what was going on. The author used the analogy of a white witch kidnapping a boy and taking him away from Hazel to explain why he didn't want to be around her anymore. This book was just not fun for me at all.

Deb Daehnke

Behind the Masks: The Diary of Angeline Reddy

By Susan Patron

This volume is a historical fiction book about the gold-mining town of Bodie, California, in the 1880s. While the adult characters and buildings described in the story are factual, the young people and events surrounding them are fictional. As with other Dear America Series books this is written in diary entry forms although the entries are much longer than in other volumes. While this was an OK read, the story line just did not grab my interest and the author's attempt to get some magic into the book made this a less than believable tale. Gold mining with Chinese

labor, vigilante type justice, and the plight of the poor and undesirables are all included in this book written for 6th grade and up. The historical notes, author's notes, and historical pictures at the conclusion of the volume help to improve the entire book.

Pat Thompson, WSC

The Espressologist

By Kristina Springer

Jane Turner is a seventeen-year-old barista and believes you can tell a lot about people by the coffee drinks they order. She keeps track of her ideas in a notebook that she calls Espressology. Jane starts hooking up some of her friends based on the drinks they order and what she thinks are characteristics of the people and their favorite drinks. When her boss becomes aware of what Jane is doing, he starts an in-store holiday promotion for the four Friday nights before Christmas, culminating in a TV show filming in the store, which highlights Jane's matchmaking. Jane has already matched two of her friends, Cam and Em, but was it right? Then when she has to match her high school nemesis from last year in high school to the boy she plans to match for herself, what will happen? This book is for grades 7-8. I would not recommend this book. This was an easy read but way too predictable. The main character is a high school senior taking some college classes and skipping classes at both schools. I felt the attitude was a little flippant regarding Jane skipping school and there were some minor sexual innuendos. It was an ok read, definitively for older middle school or junior high. With tight budgets, I would spend that money on another book, not this one.

Deb Daehnke

Sleepy So Sleepy

By Denise Fleming

Every animal sleeps. In this story baby animals are put to sleep by their parents. This book would be for very small children or even babies. Children from newborn to preschool would be an excellent audience for this book. Parents could read this story at bed time to their sleepy children. This book should be for children 2 and under. It is recommended for both public and home libraries.

Lara Morrow

The Scorpio Races

By Maggie Stiefvater

Puck Connolly and Sean Kendrick will be racing the race that occurs with the water horses each November. (a mythological horse that rises from the water and is a meat eater) The Island people catch these horses and train them to race. The horses are violent and will kill each other or the riders and at certain other times of the year they will come ashore searching for animals or people to eat. Puck is the first girl to ride and will be riding the only regular horse in the race. She meets with much resistance except from Sean who is the past winner. He trains with her hoping to win to buy Corr, his employer's horse and the one he is riding, while Puck is racing to earn the purse and save their farm. This book for Upper Middle School or Junior High, but is not recommended as a library addition. I love horses and thought I would enjoy this book. The brutality of these mythical horses and some of the riders was not enjoyable and I had a hard time trying to figure out what this book was really about. There was a love interest between Puck and Sean that might interest some readers but it wasn't enough for me.

Deb Daehnke

War & Watermelon

By Rich Wallace

Brody is a twelve-year-old New Jersey boy ending the summer of 1969 and entering 7th grade. He is going out for football and deals with all the tribulations of an adolescent who is not a stellar athlete. Many of the students at his new junior high are kids he does not know so he feels a little like the odd man out. Top that off with his best friend Tony trying to set them up with two girls in junior high and it creates a high level of anxiety for Brody. Since this is the era of the Vietnam War, Woodstock and protests, Brody's seventeen-year-old brother, Ryan, and his

father are at odds over Ryan's philosophy toward the war and this causes Brody great consternation as well as he feels his brother has always helped him out and wants to do the same for him. This book is intended for Upper Middle School or Junior High readers and recommended for any library collection. Junior high boys might like this better than girls. References to the music of this time and their trip to Woodstock are interesting and might pique an interest in what Woodstock was about. There are some poignant moments when Brody's brother, Ryan, and his father argue about Ryan enrolling in college to avoid the draft and Ryan's fear about the war. Very easy to read and might be a good choice for reluctant readers.
Deb Daehnke